

Proclamation 8502 of April 20, 2010

National Equal Pay Day, 2010

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Throughout our Nation's history, extraordinary women have broken barriers to achieve their dreams and blazed trails so their daughters would not face similar obstacles. Despite decades of progress, pay inequity still hinders women and their families across our country. National Equal Pay Day symbolizes the day when an average American woman's earnings finally match what an average American man earned in the past year. Today, we renew our commitment to end wage discrimination and celebrate the strength and vibrancy women add to our economy.

Our Nation's workforce includes more women than ever before. In households across the country, many women are the sole breadwinner, or share this role equally with their partner. However, wage discrimination still exists. Nearly half of all working Americans are women, yet they earn only about 80 cents for every dollar men earn. This gap increases among minority women and those with disabilities.

Pay inequity is not just an issue for women; American families, communities, and our entire economy suffer as a result of this disparity. We are still recovering from our economic crisis, and many hardworking Americans are still feeling its effects. Too many families are struggling to pay their bills or put food on the table, and this challenge should not be exacerbated by discrimination. I was proud that the first bill I signed into law, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act, helps women achieve wage fairness. This law brings us closer to ending pay disparities based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability by allowing more individuals to challenge inequality.

To further highlight the challenges women face and to provide a coordinated Federal response, I established the White House Council on Women and Girls. My Administration also created a National Equal Pay Enforcement Task Force to bolster enforcement of pay discrimination laws, making sure women get equal pay for an equal day's work. And, because the importance of empowering women extends beyond our borders, my Administration created the first Office for Global Women's Issues at the Department of State.

We are all responsible for ensuring every American is treated equally. From reshaping attitudes to developing more comprehensive community-wide efforts, we are taking steps to eliminate the barriers women face in the workforce. Today, let us reaffirm our pledge to erase this injustice, bring our Nation closer to the liberty promised by our founding documents, and give our daughters and granddaughters the gift of true equality.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 20, 2010, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon all Americans to acknowledge the injustice of wage discrimination and join my Administration's efforts to achieve equal pay for equal work.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand ten, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8503 of April 21, 2010

Earth Day, 2010

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

In the fall of 1969, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson announced plans for a national “environmental teach-in”—one day, each year, of action and advocacy for the environment. His words rallied our Nation, and the first Earth Day, as it became known, saw millions come together to meet one of the greatest challenges of our times: caring for our planet. What Senator Nelson and the other organizers believed then, and what we still believe today, is that our environment is a blessing we share. Our future is inextricably bound to our planet’s future, and we must be good stewards of our home as well as one another.

On the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, we come together to reaffirm those beliefs. We have come far in these past four decades. One year before the first Earth Day, our Nation watched in horror as the polluted and debris-choked Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio, caught fire. In response, a generation of Americans stepped forward to demand progress. What Americans achieved in the decades that followed has made our children healthier, our water and air cleaner, and our planet more livable.

We passed the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, established the Environmental Protection Agency, and safeguarded treasured American landscapes. Americans across our country have witnessed the impact of these measures, including the people of Cleveland, where the Cuyahoga River is cleaner than it has been in a century.

We continue to build on this progress today. My Administration has invested in clean energy and clean water infrastructure across the country. We are also committed to passing comprehensive energy and climate legislation that will create jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and cut carbon pollution.

We have more work to do, however, and change will not come from Washington alone. The achievements of the past were possible because ordinary Americans demanded them, and meeting today’s environmental challenges will require a new generation to carry on Earth Day’s cause. From weatherizing our homes to planting trees in our communities, there are countless ways for every American, young and old, to get involved. I encourage all Americans to visit WhiteHouse.gov/EarthDay for information and resources to get started.

The 40th anniversary of Earth Day is an opportunity for us to reflect on the legacy we have inherited from previous generations, and the legacy that